

NEWS RELEASE

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MAYOR GREG BALLARD ANNOUNCES INAUGURAL CLASS OF LEGACY HONOREES

TEN HOOSIERS TO BE MEMORIALIZED ON COLUMNS ALONG GEORGIA STREET

INDIANAPOLIS – Mayor Greg Ballard today introduced the names of the inaugural class of Hoosier honorees to be memorialized on columns running along Georgia Street. Following this year's inaugural class of 10 names, Mayor Ballard intends to add a few names each year hereafter. This new public space can accommodate up to 30 decorative columns.

"I thought this project would be something I looked forward to undertaking on an annual basis, but in all honesty, it's not easy to pick from so many great Hoosiers who have left an indelible mark on our city, state and country," said Mayor Ballard. "I am sure these names will spark debate; hopefully they'll also prompt strong interest in learning more about the history of our great state."

The first 10 honorees include (in alphabetical order):

President Benjamin Harrison: In 1881 the Civil War general was elected by the Indiana General Assembly to the U.S. Senate. As Senator he argued six cases before the U.S. Supreme Court. He remains the only U.S. President elected from the State of Indiana. <http://www.in.gov/gov/3030.htm>

The Lilly Family: The family of Colonel Eli Lilly, through entrepreneurial, civic and philanthropic acts, has done more for this city than can be captured in words. This honor is designed to reflect the history and generosity of the family through the decades. <http://www.lilly.com/about/Pages/history.aspx>

President Abraham Lincoln: The future President spent his youth and formative years in Indiana, and no list of great Hoosiers would be complete without our nation's 16th and most celebrated President. <http://www.whitehouse.gov/about/presidents/abrahamlincoln>

J.L. "Wes" Montgomery: This legendary jazz guitarist, Grammy winner and Indianapolis native has been an influence on musicians for decades. <http://www.in.gov/gov/3520.htm>

Ernest “Ernie” Pyle: The American journalist wrote as a roving correspondent for the Scripps Howard newspaper chain from 1935 until his death in combat during World War II. He was awarded a Pulitzer Prize in 1944. <http://www.in.gov/gov/3577.htm>

Booth Tarkington: A two-time Pulitzer Prize-winning author, his novels “The Magnificent Ambersons” – widely considered one of the greatest American novels of all time – and “The Gentleman from Indiana” are both master works based on Tarkington’s experiences in Indianapolis. <http://www.in.gov/gov/2563.htm>

May Wright Sewall: The renowned leader of the women’s suffrage movement served as a delegate to the 1st National Suffrage Convention, was President of both the National and International Councils of Women, and co-founded multiple civic organizations in Indianapolis. <http://www.in.gov/gov/2562.htm>

Tecumseh: The Shawnee chief, orator, warrior and diplomat was leader of the Shawnee Confederation and one of the most important Native American leaders in history. <http://www.tcha.mus.in.us/battlehistory.htm>

Madame C.J. Walker: This entrepreneur was the first self-made female American millionaire and the wealthiest African-American woman in America during her lifetime. <http://www.in.gov/gov/2566.htm>

Lew Wallace: The Civil War General was author of the best-selling American novel “Ben-Hur: A Tale of the Christ,” member of the tribunal that tried the Lincoln conspirators, Governor of the New Mexico Territory and American Ambassador to the Ottomans. <http://www.in.gov/gov/2564.htm>

Mayor Ballard solicited legacy honoree recommendations from the Greater Indianapolis Progress Committee (GIPC). The GIPC recommendation panel included: Deborah Daniels, Chairperson of GIPC; Theodore Boehm, Indiana Supreme Court Justice (ret); Gerald Bepko, Chancellor Emeritus, IUPUI; Ray Boomhower, Senior Editor at the Indiana Historical Society; Thomas King, owner, Thomas A. King Consulting; Samuel Odle, Executive Vice President/COO, IU Health; Dr. Patricia Payne, Director of Multi-Cultural Education at Indianapolis Public Schools; Joseph Slash, President of the Indianapolis Urban League; and, Fay Williams, attorney. The panel also relied on the recommendations of noted historians including: Wilma Moore, Senior Archivist of African American History at the Indiana Historical Society; Dale Ogden, Senior Curator of Cultural History at the Indiana State Museum; Stephen E. Towne, Associate University Archivist with IUPUI Special Collections and Archives; and Dr. David Vanderstel, Executive Director of Advancement at Martin University.

The panel considered many factors when weighing its recommendations including: person has been deceased at least 20 years, spent a significant portion of their life in Indiana and the person’s accomplishments attained national/international recognition.

Installation of columns honoring these great Hoosiers will begin along Georgia Street in February. They will be dedicated in early March in conjunction with the Big Ten Basketball Tournament. The cost of each column is about \$10,000. The 2011 Indianapolis Super Bowl Host Committee is donating the cost of these monuments as part of its legacy project to impact our community beyond the game.

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